1 Chrin.11:25 "Howbeit, he attained not unto the first three."

INTRO. Took a look at some class pictures.
Some have passed out of the picture.
Some have grown up to be good useful citizens.
Some of apparently no promise while in school have forged ahead to geat success
bWhile otbrs of outstanding promise have not attained unto the expectations of them.
It is about the latter kind that I wish to speak
Let us look first at our text as it brings them strikingly before us.
"Howbeit, he attained not unto the first three."

Taken from the account of David's thirty men of valor.
The incident of David's thirst and the dari ing of three who crossed into the enemies lines drew water from a well at Bethlehem, and return ed safely to David withwater to drink.

One of these was Abashai, the mightiest of the three who secured the water. At one time he had slain 300 single-handed, a man of great valor. Yet, he attained not ~~unto~~ to the first 3.
Another was Beniah who had done many brave acts.
He slew two giant Moabites.
He slew an Egyptian of great stature.
In a snowy day he killed a lion in a pit.
Yet he attained not to the first three of the 30.

What kept these men from attaining to the first three? We do not know. Perhaps on certain occasions they were brilliantly brave, but in the long steady grind of every-day life they lost out.
Perhaps some fatal weakness prevented them. intemperance, dishonesty, untruthfulnes

At all events, whatever the reason, they did not attain, in spite of their heroic deeds and and consequent promise of first success.

What keeps men from attaining unto their very best? We are interested only in moral and spiritual reasons.

I. Some possible reasons.

Some Causes of Failure: 1. Lack of independence of character and self-reliance. 2. Lack of will power and application. 3. Lack of managing power. 4. Depending on others and waiting for opportunities. 5. Neglect of details. 6. Self-conceit. 7. Presuming on one's own smartness. 8. Lack of definite purpose. 9. Lack of system. 10. Lack of faithfulness in humble places.

Dishonesty is only second to dissipation among causes of failure. Want of character leads to want of cash and customers.

Among the mice that nibble away success are "little tricks of trade," "dishonesty in little things," "untruthfulness."

2. Often it is presence of ~~a~~ the single unconquered weakness in a man's make-up that prevents him from getting to his first place in life.

3. Another reason for many disappointments is that some are content with their past achievements, thus becoming blinded to what they may still accomplish, if they only would exert themselves.

Perhaps Abishai was like that. I can fancy him going about and boasting, "Do you remember the day when I met the 300 and smote them to the ground?"

Often students at school win prizes for outstandingachievement, then afterwards become mediocre men. They become satisfied prigs who feed their conceit with past achievements.

Relying on past laurels has ruined many a man of great promise.

Con. Not so Paul. "Not as tho I had already attained", he declared; "but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind ~~and pressing forward~~

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus."

Ah, here is the secret of the mighty Paul. Let this be our ideal-Christ and no less. Then we shall never be satisfied with our past poor attainments, but pressing ever on and up, we shall at last be counted worthy to stand among those who have come to the measure of the stature of a perfect man, the man made perfect in Christ Jesus.

Compensation.

"Thots hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke thru language and escape
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Browning in Rabbi Ben Ezra.